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Vindication of the Entomological  
and Museum Divisions of the Department  
of Agriculture. 1872.





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VINDICATION

OF THE

ENTOMOLOGICAL AND MUSEUM

DIVISIONS

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

by  
Townsend Storer

WASHINGTON:

1872.



## A VINDICATION.

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In a pamphlet recently issued by the Government Printing Office, purporting to be a history of the Department of Agriculture\* from the pen of its present Chief Clerk, James M. Swank, many statements are made in regard to the Entomological and Museum Divisions which may have the tendency to place the Entomologist in a false light, and give an erroneous impression of what has already been accomplished. In defense of myself I have undertaken to correct a few of the most glaring misstatements in the following pages, of which a limited number of copies *only* are published, for the benefit of those of my friends who are unacquainted with the facts of the case.

TOWNEND GLOVER.

*Note 1.* In the opening paragraph of the section devoted to the Entomological Division the reader is told that "the scope of the Division, as at present administered, is best explained in the language of the Entomologist himself in an extract from his report to the Commissioner for 1870," the first sixteen lines are then quoted, the last five of which are taken by the writer as a text for subsequent remark. They are as follows:

"To give publicity to these facts it will be necessary to quote extensively from Mr. Riley, of the American Entomologist and Botanist, Dr. Fitch, Dr. Walsh, and other standard practical entomologists, whose works the greater number of our readers may never chance to see." (page 59.)

\*"The Department of Agriculture, its History and Objects."

The concluding sentence of the paragraph, however, and the principal part, has been studiously omitted by Mr. Swank. "*I shall also give extracts from the correspondence of the Department, from my private note book, and the results of experiments made in the Department.*" This entirely changes the meaning of the paragraph and has been omitted in order to mislead, and cause the reader to suppose that the Entomologist's report is made up from the writings of Mr. Riley and other entomologists *alone*, while the truth of the matter is that what has been quoted from Mr. R. is comprised in about twenty-seven lines in as many full pages, (see page 87,) and of the sixty figures given, only one is from Riley, while there are at least thirty-five from nature by the Entomologist.

*Note 2.* "The Entomologist is fortunate in having access to a most valuable collection of entomological works in the library of the Department for daily reference." (page 59.)

At the time this report was written this remarkable library contained only about a dozen entomological works of any consequence, (as may be seen by the date of receipt, which is stamped on the title page of each volume,) and from which no extracts whatever were taken, and even at the present time the library is exceedingly poor in entomological works for reference, although \$500 was one year appropriated by Congress for this purpose.

*Note 3.* "It would seem that the Entomologist of the Department should frequently verify, by personal observation in the field and orchard, the correctness of the theories and suggestions of other entomologists." (page 60.)

Passing over at least twelve years of personal observation, wholly in the field, there are observations made, almost daily, in the Department on the habits and metamorphoses of insects by both the Entomologist and his assistant, although, perhaps, they may not be reported to the Chief Clerk, who



is incapable of distinguishing one insect from another, and who, only a little while before being appointed Chief Clerk, showed the greatest ignorance on the subject.

As for allowing absence from the Department for observation in the field, as suggested above, it may be well to state that the Entomologist's assistant was once reprimanded by the Chief Clerk for having left the building for a short time, at the request of the Entomologist, to obtain some necessary information on entomological subjects, and pertaining wholly to the business of the office, without Mr. Swank's permission.

*Note 4.* "The museum is not strictly an agricultural museum. In its cases may be found many specimens which have no relation whatever to agriculture." (page 60.)

It is not strictly agricultural, as an "Economic" museum has also been commenced, where it is intended not only to show cotton, flax, &c., in their natural state, as grown by the agriculturist, but also to exhibit the various fabrics that can be made from them. The Chief Clerk, however, has not taken into consideration that most, if not all, of the manufactures are entirely dependent upon agriculture for the raw material from which the various fabrics are made, and, that in order to show the one to advantage, the other must also be in the cabinet. All the specimens having no relation whatever to agriculture, directly or indirectly, can be put in the space of a quarter to one half of a case, and there are, at present, eighteen cases in the museum; making the proportion about one part in thirty-six, not having some relation to the real objects of the museum.

*Note 5.* In speaking of the models of fruit, vegetables, &c., in the museum, (page 61,) no mention is made of the fact that most of them were prepared by the Entomologist, but at the end of the article it is stated that "a modeller of fruits and vegetables" is employed, conveying the idea that he has mod-

elled and colored all the fruits, &c., in the museum, although three-fourths of them were made and painted by the Entomologist, before the Department existed. The modeller has only been employed a year and a half, or two years.

*Note 6.* This quotation is, briefly, "no agricultural implements to show to visitors from our own, or foreign lands," but Mr. Swank knows very well that until the present year, there has been no money appropriated for the purchase of any specimens whatever; the paragraph, however, is inserted for effect, as models of all the machines are on exhibition in the Patent Office, and it would take six such halls as that in which the museum is located, to contain a tithe of the agricultural machines invented yearly, and a few weeks ago, when the last case was finished, Mr. S. thought the museum completed.

*Note 7.* Mr. Swank states that "the museum is in charge of the Entomologist," (page 62,) but no mention, whatever, is made of the various duties devolving upon the Entomologist, answering letters pertaining to the museum, conversing with visitors, and answering their questions, upon the subjects of fibres, fruits, grains, insects, &c., &c., which often consumes so much time, that the reports and articles for the annual or monthly reports, have to be prepared at home after the necessary official duty for the day is supposed to be finished.

*Note 8.* The taxidermist has also the care of the specimens in the museum, and, doubtless, is mentioned by Mr. Swank to lead persons to suppose that all the birds in the museum were prepared by said taxidermist, while in reality the major part of the collection, (with the exception of the fowls,) were skins bought by the Entomologist, or shot by him, and mounted after the hours of official duty, and presented to the Department. Most of the foreign game birds, capable of semi-domestication, as Pheasants, &c., (amounting to several

hundred dollars worth,) were purchased by the Entomologist out of his private funds and presented to the Department.

No credit, whatever, is given for nearly 250 copies of the colored engravings of noxious and beneficial insects, all of which were engraved and colored by the Entomologist, out of office hours. These are neatly framed, and have been presented to the Department, and occupy the whole of one end of the museum; but this is too small a matter for the Chief Clerk to notice in his able and courteous remarks on the Entomologist, and the divisions of which he has charge.

That the Commissioner of Agriculture does not coincide with the views expressed by his Chief Clerk, may be clearly seen by glancing at his complimentary remarks, concerning the Entomologist and his work, on page 59, Proceedings of the National Agricultural Convention.

In conclusion, what Mr. Swank's real motives were for making such statements, we do not say, but with all the facts of the case before us, it would seem to be wholly a personal matter, gotten up to cause the Entomologist to resign, or to be removed, as in the case of the late Botanist, Dr. Parry.



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